



News Release

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Release No. 01- 32
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For Release: December 19, 2001

Corps of Engineers and Maryland Port Administration sign cooperation agreement

Baltimore – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District and the Maryland Port Administration signed a Project Cooperation Agreement today that will result in improvements to the existing anchorages and channels in Baltimore Harbor.

The navigational improvements include the deepening and widening of channels, anchorages and berths, providing cut-off angles and constructing a turning basin at the head of the Fort McHenry Channel. These improvements will provide for safer and more efficient accommodations of modern container ships and other vessels entering the Port of Baltimore.

“We are incredibly pleased to see this project move forward thanks to the work of the Army Corps of Engineers and our Congressional representatives,” said John D. Porcari, Secretary of Maryland Department of Transportation. “It will give us anchorages and a channel system consistent with industry standards and able to accommodate today’s shipping fleet while helping secure the competitiveness of the Port of Baltimore.”

All of the dredged material resulting from these improvements, an estimated 3.9 million cubic yards, will be placed at the State of Maryland's Hart-Miller Island containment facility.

The Baltimore Harbor anchorage areas were initially authorized between 1909 and 1945. Since then the size of shipping vessels has greatly increased making the width and depth of many channels in the port insufficient. Large vessels requiring anchorage must currently anchor 25 miles south of the Port of Baltimore in the naturally deep water at the Annapolis Anchorage Grounds.

“This project has undergone a rigorous review process by all levels of the Corps. It meets the objective of federal navigation projects by contributing to national economic development while protecting the environment,” said Col. Charles J. Fiala Jr., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District commander.

A benefit-cost analysis using analyses conducted in 2001, showed the project will provide benefits 1.3 times greater than the project costs.

The Baltimore Harbor Anchorages and Channels project is currently estimated to cost about \$28 million. This cost will be shared by the agencies at a split of roughly 69 percent federal and 31 percent local.

Congress authorized this project as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. An overview of the Baltimore Harbor Anchorages and Channels project is available at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/Maryland/Anchorage/index.html>.

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